

THE WORK OF THE HSUS'S HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL (HSI) ENCOMPASSES IMPORTANT PROJECTS ALL OVER THE WORLD. HERE IS A BRIEF REPORT ON THE MOST RECENT OF THESE ACTIVITIES.



A QUESTION OF MORALITY

Can he who has only discovered the value of whale-bone and whale-oil be said to have discovered the true uses of the whale? Can he who slays the elephant for his ivory be said to have seen the elephant? No, these are petty and accidental uses. Just as if a stronger race were to kill us in order to make buttons and flageolets of our bones, and then prate the usefulness of man.

—Henry David Thoreau, *The Journal*, 1853

This is an essay about elephants and morality: our morality, not theirs.

It is a story about African elephants, the largest land mammals left on planet Earth.

African elephants are facing perhaps the last—and certainly the greatest—threat to their continued existence as a species. By the time you read this, the nations of the world will have decided the fate of the African elephant in the wild (see the Winter 1992 *HSUS News*). If the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) ban on ivory is lifted in even one small corner of the world, the death sentence for all African elephants will have been irrevocably delivered. Just as irrevocably, a judgment will have been passed on the human species.

I spent five weeks in southern Africa documenting the elephant poaching endemic to that region. In the countries I visited (Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Botswana), elephant poaching is widespread.

Millions of words have been written about elephants: scientific descriptions of

their age, social structure, mating habits, herd composition, and dietary habits and arguments about the merits of what is euphemistically called elephant management but is simply the murder of entire families of gentle giants.

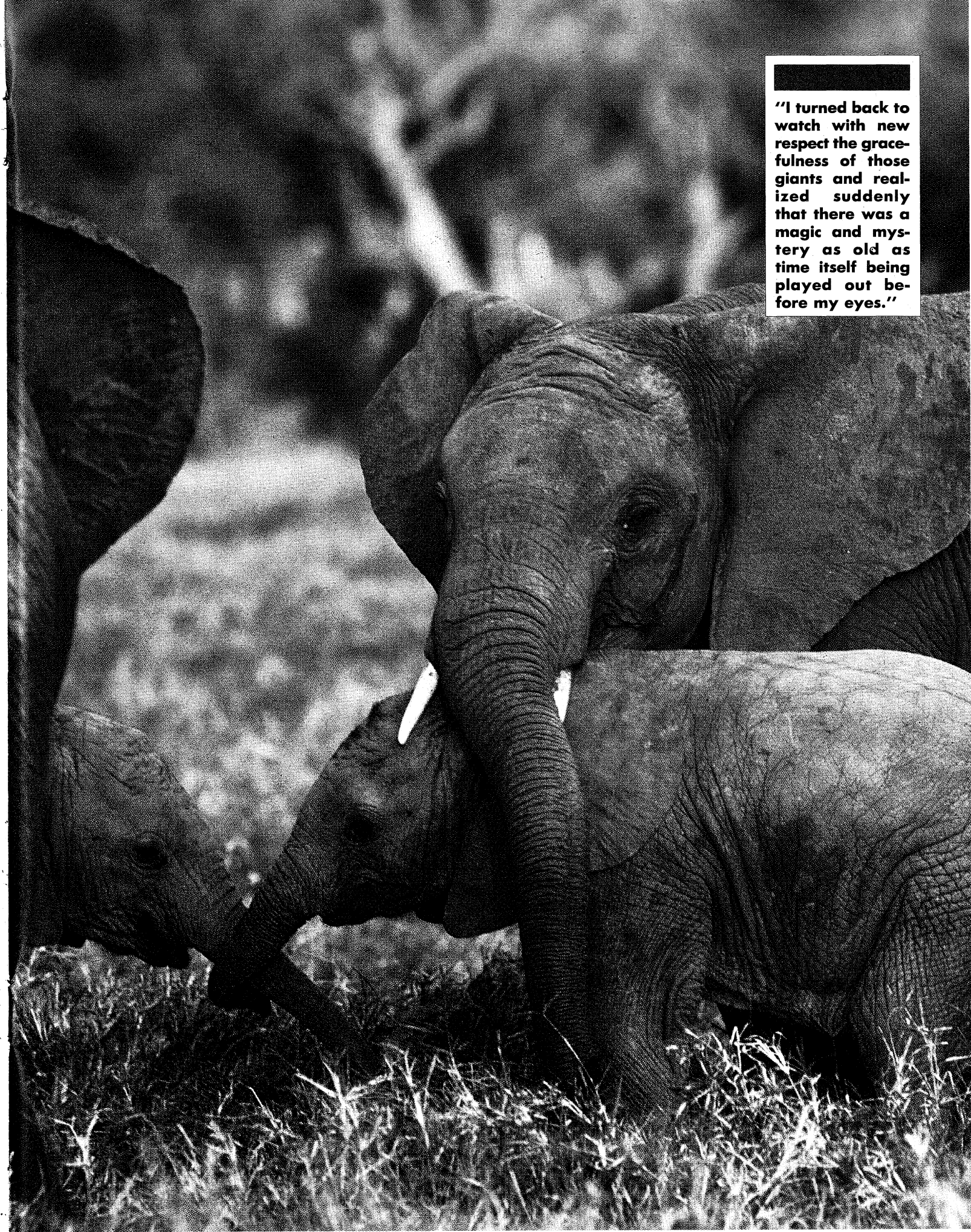
Stories have been told of the millions of elephants that inhabited the African continent at the turn of the century. These tales in turn have given way to descriptions of the brutal slaying of millions of these animals over the past four decades and of the men and women who craved the teeth of these fascinating and unique evolutionary miracles. People have lusted after ivory since the dawn of civilization; indeed, it is worth at times as much per kilogram as gold itself. An elephant's worth was—and in many circles still is—determined by the ivory it carries. Even today trophy hunters and poachers alike talk wistfully of the days when they bagged a "hundred pounder" or a "seventy pounder," referring to the weight of a single tusk.

But there are no hundred pounders or seventy pounders today. Hunted mercilessly for ivory, elephants no longer roam the African continent in the millions. Best guesses are that anywhere from 600,000 to perhaps as few as 400,000 elephants remain. Those may not exist by the end of the decade.

Stories have been told about elephants that didn't involve ivory or trophies. They describe the incredible love and affection elephants have

for one another. There are stories of two elephants trying to help a wounded and dying comrade by lifting him to his feet; of a daughter who returns frequently to the skeletal remains of her murdered mother,

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GREGORY G. DIMIAN/PHOTO RESEARCHERS, INC.

each time gently touching her mother's skull with her trunk; of herd members surrounding babies shot and killed by poachers or government rangers, refusing to abandon the bodies even as they are killed one by one. There have been stories of the teaching and guidance the elder females give to the young of the herd, stories that describe in detail a rich, complex, and compassionate matriarchal society.

I would like to add to all that has been written two brief tales of elephant behavior that I witnessed during my investigation.

One evening, about half an hour before dusk, I sat with my friend and guide Greg

Henrichson on the banks of the South Luangwa River in Zambia. As we watched, one hundred yards away, a herd of fifteen elephants walked down the banks and into the river for its evening bath. I watched six- and seven-ton animals frolic like puppies in the water and mud. They played tag with one another. They wrestled, they sprayed water, they pushed lightly and gracefully as though they were African bushbuck on springy little feet. During the fun, a young mother and tiny calf came into the water and joined the group. The playing grew more enthusiastic, and the roughhousing more intense. I whispered to Greg, "They are going to step on the baby."

"No way," he replied. "David, I've been watching elephants for over twenty years and never have I seen a baby even bumped by the herd, not even when they were fleeing from a hunter's rifle." I turned back to watch with new respect the gracefulness of those giants and realized suddenly that there was a magic and mystery as old as time itself being played out before my eyes. Suddenly my eyes watered as I felt for just a brief, searing moment the pain they must feel when their babies are shot to death before their eyes.

My second story is not so pleasant. As I traveled, I saw carcass after carcass of elephants murdered for their ivory: a

fifteen-year-old in Kafue, Zambia; a twelve-year-old in Zimbabwe near Mana Pools; two twelve-year-old bulls gut shot in the Luangwa-Lushishi region of Zambia. Near Kafue National Park we came upon a blood trail only a week or so old. As we followed the trail, Greg explained, "See, the animal has been shot low, probably in the guts, and is heading toward the river." "How can you know?" I asked. "See here, David," Greg pointed. "See where he leaned against the trees? See the dried blood, near a quart or so. It is low on the tree, so the animal is small and young and the wound is low."

Finally, after ten or twelve such bloodstains, we found the carcass of a female elephant no more than eight years old. She had fallen and would not stand again. Her killers had beaten her to death with an ax. "Her ivory could not have weighed eight pounds," Greg said. She was a half mile from the river. "How did you know she would head for the river?" I asked Greg. "David, when they get shot it must burn like hell itself, and they try to find water to relieve the agony," he explained.

Sometimes when I see what we as a species do to animals, I feel as though we must be insane. There are 30 million people in southern Africa, but apparently room cannot be found for 600,000 of the most complex and intelligent mammals on this planet.

Suffering does not occur to a species. Suffering is reserved for individuals. Just as individual human beings suffer pain or emotional trauma, so do individual animals: so do elephants.

Elephants grieve, suffer, and experience joy and sorrow as surely as we do. Why is it so difficult for people to accept their pain and their grief as kindred to their own?

In *Elephant Memories*, Cynthia Moss writes:

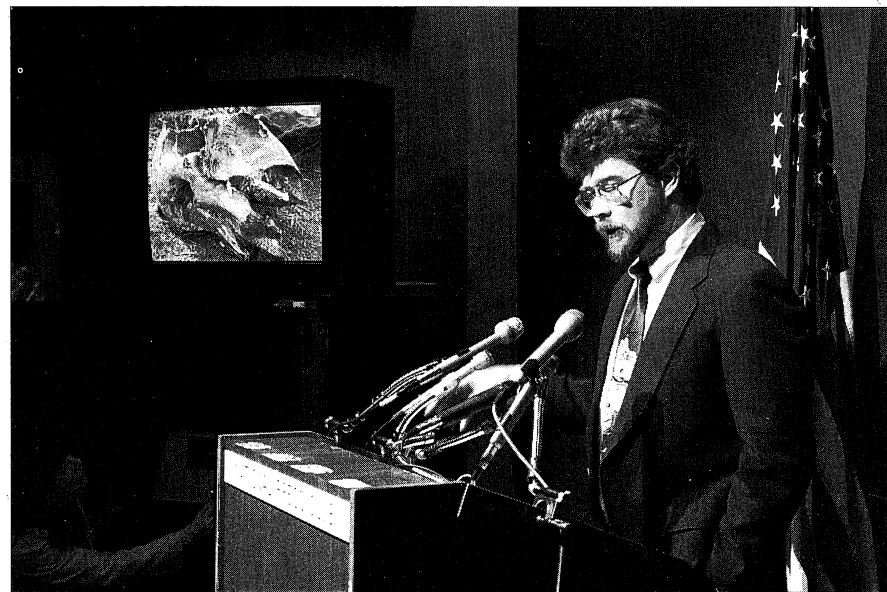
After eighteen years of watching elephants, I still feel a tremendous thrill at witnessing a greeting ceremony. Somehow it epitomizes what makes elephants so special and interesting. I have no doubt even in my most scientifically rigorous moments that the elephants are experiencing joy when they find each other. It may not be similar to human joy or even comparable, but it is an elephantine joy and it plays an important part in their whole social system.

Why isn't it similar to human joy? Ele-

decision makers who could help ensure that, at the CITES meeting, our government voted for continued Appendix I protection for African elephants. To reach yet more people, The HSUS released radio public-service announcements in which actresses Candice Bergen and Loretta Swit urge people not to buy ivory and to protect the African elephant.

who slaughter the oldest of the elephants for their tusks.

Broadcast on local television news programs, an HSUS-produced video brought the story of African elephants to hundreds of thousands of viewers. "Fox Morning News" aired a thirty-second HSUS advertisement about African elephants; the program is viewed by Washington, D.C.,



At the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., in January, David Wills, HSUS/HSI vice president, investigations, describes the destruction of elephant herds by poachers in Africa.

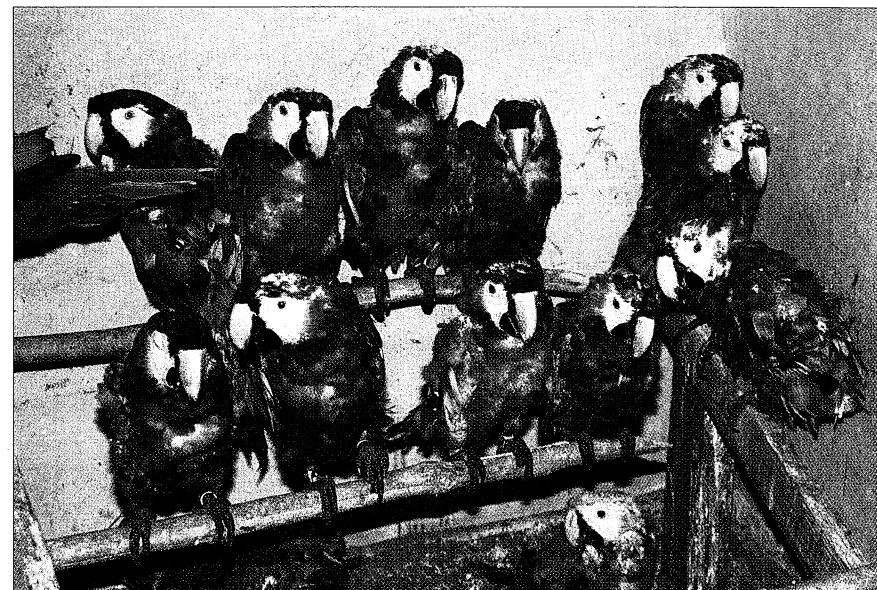


INVESTIGATION IN SPOTLIGHT

The HSUS/HSI held a news conference to announce the results of an undercover investigation into the plight of the African elephant.

The investigation was conducted by HSUS/HSI Vice President, Investigations, David K. Wills, who traveled to four southern African nations to collect data in preparation for the March 1992 CITES meeting. Mr. Wills discovered that dwindling African elephant populations in Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe cannot withstand any weakening of the CITES Appendix I listing, which placed an international ban on the trade in elephant parts, such as ivory, beginning in January 1990 (see the Winter 1992 *HSUS News* and page 16). Several African countries were proposing to down-list the African elephant to Appendix II at the March meeting; down-listing would legalize trade in elephant parts.

Reporters from Fox News, ABC-TV and Radio, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, Tribune Broadcasting, and the Associated Press saw footage Mr. Wills had taken of elephants in Africa and heard about the destruction of elephant herds by poachers



Import of wild-caught birds (such as these macaws) into the European Community for pets should end, says Caroline Jackson.

BIRD CRISIS IS FOCUS OF REPORT

Timing in politics is everything, especially in the politics of the wild-caught bird trade. The European Parliament recently approved a report that outlines ways to end the trade. If this report becomes a regulation proposed by the European Commission and approved by the European Council, the cruelty of the wild-caught bird trade and its threat to the biodiversity of species could end.

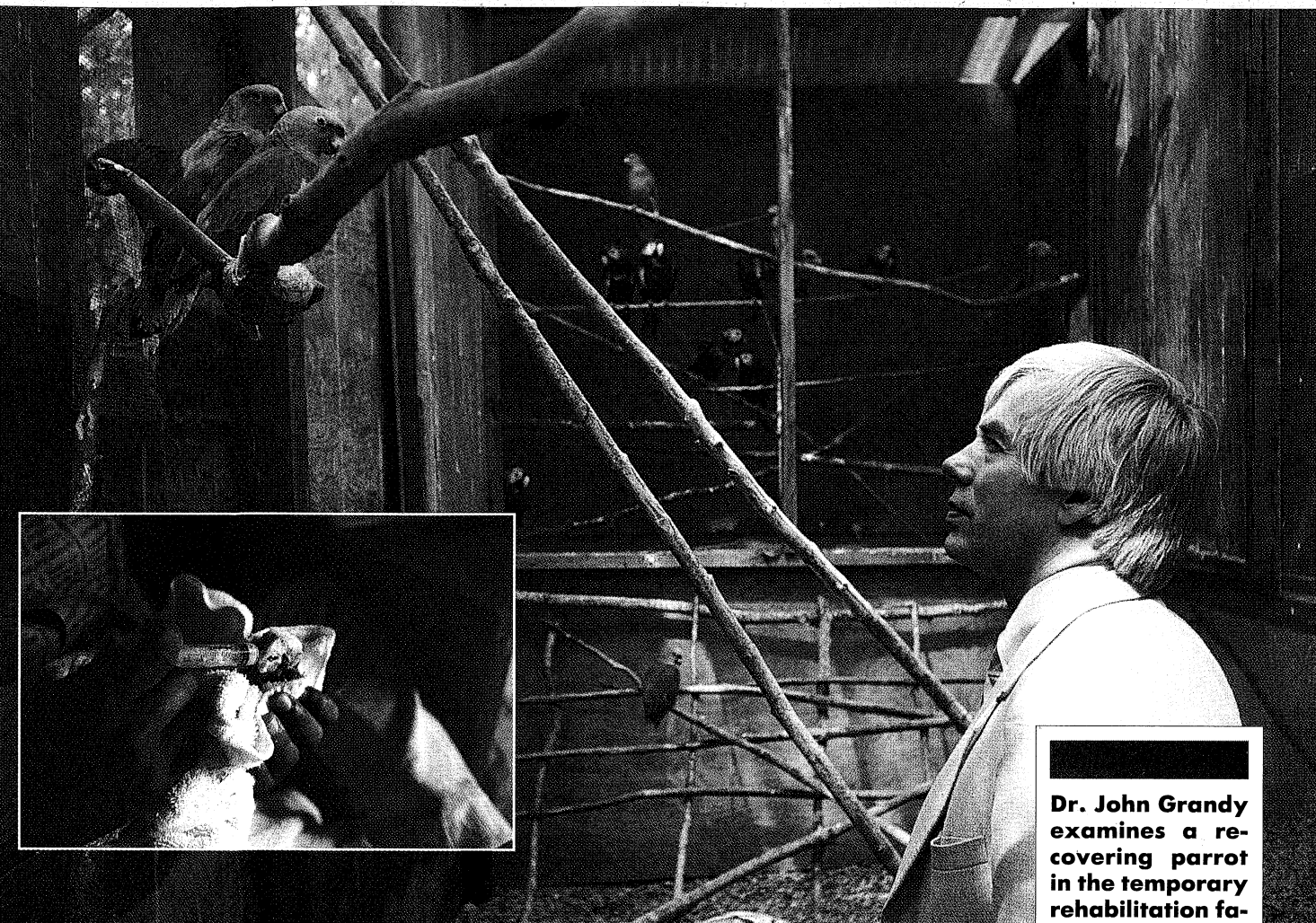
But the European Commission is not hurrying to pass a law to protect wild-caught birds. The Commission has publicly stated that it does not believe such a law is currently necessary and that it will not, therefore, pursue remedies proposed by the European Parliament. Because every day of delay means increasing numbers of dead birds, European environmentalists are now trying to gain revisions to the European Community regulations that implement CITES in Europe. Now under discussion, revisions could quickly accomplish some of the goals specified in the European Parliament's Jackson Report. Ultimately, however, comprehensive laws on this problem are necessary.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds spearheaded the European Parliament's recognition of the wild-caught bird crisis. The HSUS/HSI is working closely with these organizations to ensure a speedy end to the cruel wild-bird trade.

"Imports of wild-caught birds into the European Community for the pet trade should be banned on conservation and animal-welfare grounds," said Caroline Jackson in the report approved by the European Parliament.

She added, "This does not mean that the pet trade should be banned. All species of birds that are suitable for keeping in captivity can be bred in captivity."

The report recommends a ban on wild-caught birds in all but "exceptional circumstances." Such a ban would clearly specify any exemptions, as determined by the European Commission—such as birds needed for breeding. The exemptions would need to comply with animal-welfare requirements established by the commission. Ms. Jackson's report also recommends that a European animal-welfare inspectorate enforce this and future wild-caught bird legislation. —Betsy Dribben, European director, HSI



Dr. John Grandy examines a recovering parrot in the temporary rehabilitation facility set up by The HSUS/HSI in Honduras. Inset: a baby parrot is fed at the center.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HSUS/DANTZLER

phants breathe the air we breathe. They bleed blood that is red. They are made of the same basic materials we are. They are just different in shape and size—in form but not in essence.

That is what I really learned—or I should say reaffirmed—in Africa. Until we learn to mourn the loss of an individual elephant, we have learned nothing. The mark of the human species must be compassion. Anything less reduces us to mere intellectual constructs. Our claim to be civilized is an empty one unless we learn to grieve for the loss of any sentient life. Clearly, with creatures as complex and intelligent as elephants, our failure to view their individual suffering and grief as anything less compelling than our own displays an insensitivity and ignorance that marks our species as immature and our morality as incomplete.

Perhaps one day we will communicate with the elephants. I, for one, hope to be there to beg their forgiveness for what we have done. I only hope and pray that they will be here to listen.—*David Wills, HSUS/HSI vice president, investigations*



HSI HONDURAS

DEDICATED TO WILDLIFE

November 20, 1991, was a historic day for The HSUS/HSI. HSUS President Paul G. Irwin met with the president of Honduras, Rafael Leonard Callejas, and Mario Nufio Gamero, minister of natural resources, in a formal ceremony in the presidential palace to sign agreements committing The HSUS/HSI to a cooperative

program for the rescue and rehabilitation of wild birds in Honduras.

The project is the first of its kind in Central America and, we believe, the first in the world. A local nongovernmental organization, with advice and technical assistance from The HSUS/HSI, will work with local people to develop ecotourism and local support for the preservation and protection of native wild birds. With the help

of the U.S. Peace Corps, project leaders will educate the public through demonstrations of the beauty and value of wild birds. This program represents a country's strong commitment to protect its wildlife from unbridled exploitation fueled by the demand for pet birds in the United States and western Europe.

By protecting its wildlife and encouraging nonconsumptive, nondestructive bird-watching—ecotourism—Honduras will reap the benefits of an enhanced tourist economy and flourishing wildlife populations. The alternative is decimation by the pet trade, which offers almost no benefit to the country in exchange for destroying precious native wildlife.

Birds—and all of the country's wildlife—are protected by a Honduran presidential decree that was issued in response to this havoc. Last year fourteen white-fronted Amazon parrots were confiscated by the government of Honduras after The HSUS investigated wild-bird smuggling and committed to aid in the birds' rehabilitation (see the Fall 1991 *HSUS News*). Team leader Karolann Kemenosh has been in Honduras since July 1991, actively supervising the rehabilitation, medical treatment, and release of the birds, who have been housed at a temporary facility at the Tegucigalpa Zoo.

The ceremony drew attention to the successful release of the rehabilitated birds. For future rehabilitation projects, Recursos Naturales and COHDEFOR, the major government agencies in Honduras concerned with the protection of wildlife and habitat, formally agreed to cooperate actively with The HSUS/HSI in constructing a permanent rehabilitation facility in La Ceiba. Dr. Obdulio Menghi, scientific coordinator of CITES, who was present at the ceremony, announced that the Honduran bird-rehabilitation center would serve as a regional facility for Central America.

In early February Dr. John W. Grandy, HSUS vice president, wildlife and habitat protection, met with Honduran officials to confirm the donation of \$18,000 of land to the Fundacion Cuero y Salada (FUCSA) for the construction of the facility. Construction should be completed by mid-April. By summer FUCSA will assume complete responsibility for the rehabilitation of wild birds. ■



HSI USA

ASSEMBLY UNITES WOMEN

In November 1991 Miami was the site of an event that brought together almost 500 women committed to global ecology and environmental management. The meeting was the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment: "Partners In Life," sponsored by the Senior Women's Advisory Group to the executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Among the principal participants was Patricia Forkan, HSI senior vice president and HSUS executive vice president. She served as coordinator of a special mentor program that included representatives from academia, foundations, corporations, governmental agencies, international institutions, and nongovernmental organizations. Working together, the mentor group participants developed recommendations for ways in which their kinds of institutions can better support and promote the activities of women at every level of environmental manage-

ment. Ms. Forkan introduced their recommendations at the final Assembly session.

Throughout the five-day Assembly, participants heard literally hundreds of environmental success stories from around the world. The projects focused on any of four themes: water, waste, energy, and environmentally friendly systems. Two noteworthy projects involved dolphin protection and sea-turtle conservation.

Ms. Forkan said the Global Assembly presented a critically important message. She noted, "Looking at the range of environmental projects from every continent, many accomplished with very limited resources, it's clear that the world's women have the capacity and the will to create an environmentally sound future for all who share the Earth."

The recommendations and action plans developed at the Global Assembly are expected to become part of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the so-called Earth Summit, at which Ms. Forkan will represent The HSUS/HSI. ■



Patricia Forkan, senior vice president, HSI (left), and delegates from around the world grasp a globe symbolically during the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment, which was convened in Miami, Florida, in November.

LAURALEA CANNON